

wing-coverts, quills, and tail-feathers dusky brown, edged with paler whitish brown; a superciliary line and a small stripe under the eye white; throat white, marked irregularly down the side and in the middle with dusky brown spots; ear-coverts, upper part of the breast, and flanks pale greyish brown; abdomen and under tail-coverts pure white; bill pale horn-brown, lower mandible much paler and inclining to yellowish white; feet dusky brown. Total length 5·3 inches, wing 3·35, tail 2·1, tarsus 0·7.

Hab. Damara Land (*C. J. Andersson*).

This bird seems to be the South-African representative of *Poliospiza xanthopygia* (Rüpp.), a careful description of which is given by Dr. von Heuglin (*Orn. Nordost-Afr.* p. 641), but is considerably larger in all its dimensions. At first sight it might be taken for *Crithagra albogularis*, Smith (*S. Afr. Q. Journ.* ii. p. 48), but differs in the bright sulphur-coloured rump being common to both sexes, whereas in *C. albogularis* the female has the rump uniform with the back. *Poliospiza crococygia* is also much lighter in coloration than *C. albogularis*.

VIII.—*Letters, Extracts from Correspondence, Announcements, &c.*

INSTEAD of the articles entitled "*Recent Ornithological Publications*" which have hitherto appeared in 'The Ibis,' the Editor proposes to give in the October number of each year notices of all books and papers relating to Ornithology published during the preceding year. These will be arranged in alphabetical order, and will contain such remarks as each publication seems to call for. It is believed that this plan will render this portion of 'The Ibis' less ephemeral in its nature, and that it will be useful as a permanent index for reference.

In order to make this article as perfect as possible, Contributors to 'The Ibis' and all other ornithologists are requested to forward to the Editor, before the 1st of July next, a complete list of their publications during the year 1870.

We have received the following letters addressed to "The Editor of 'The Ibis'":—

Marldon, Totnes, 23rd November, 1870.

SIR,—In a list of birds from the colony of Natal, contributed by me to 'The Ibis' for 1859, I included (at page 246) the South-African grey Cuckoo (*Cuculus gularis* of Stephens, *C. lineatus* of Swainson, *Le Coucou vulgaire d'Afrique* of Le Vailant), with an accompanying note from Mr. Ayres to the effect that the bird was "very rare" in Natal.

I have recently reexamined the two skins sent over by Mr. Ayres upon which the above notice was founded, in company with Messrs. Jules P. Verreaux and R. B. Sharpe, both of whom agree with me in considering that I was wrong in assigning them to *Cuculus gularis*, and that they are in fact specimens of the true European *Cuculus canorus*, in very nearly adult plumage, but still retaining some little remains of the immature dress in the wings and on the back.

I believe that no instance of the occurrence of *Cuculus canorus* so far south has hitherto been recorded, though Drs. Finsch and Hartlaub, in their recent excellent work on the birds of East Africa, refer at page 520 to a specimen of the European Cuckoo which they have seen from Damara Land, where two other examples, now in the collection of Mr. R. B. Sharpe, were also obtained by the late Mr. Andersson. One of these Damara birds is a male, in a state of change very similar to that shown by my specimens from Natal, killed on the 6th February; and the other is a fully adult female killed on the 1st April.

The most constant difference between the adults of *Cuculus canorus* and of *C. gularis* appears to be that in the latter the base of the upper mandible is yellow and the anterior part only is a black horn-colour, whilst in the former the entire upper mandible is black, except a very narrow yellowish edging immediately below the nostrils.

Cuculus gularis, when adult, also differs from the majority of adult specimens of *C. canorus* in being slightly smaller, and in having the white spots and markings on the tail larger.

I am yours, &c., J. H. GURNEY.

SIR,—I have on several occasions furnished you with accounts, which you have thought worthy of notice, of the birds I have

encountered during my trips by sea to various parts of the world. During my recent voyage from the Cape I fell in with so many land-birds far out at sea that I cannot refrain from again troubling you with a few notes.

We sailed from Table Bay on the 4th of October last; we may call it our first spring month, perhaps. The usual Cape birds accompanied us till nightfall, *Diomedea melanophrys*, *Procellaria æquinoctialis*, *P. gigantea*, *P. capensis* and the little *Thalassidroma wilsoni*. Next morning only the two latter were in any numbers, and an occasional *P. macroptera*, easily distinguishable by its large bill, swept past us. On the third day all had left us save the Storm-petrels (*T. wilsoni*), which were in greater numbers than I had ever seen before, and I managed to snare two of them with black thread.

They remained with us in diminishing numbers till we reached St. Helena; indeed we saw an odd bird now and then till we came to the Bay of Biscay. At St. Helena we fell in with *Gygis candida* and *Anous stolidus* in considerable flocks. My friend Mr. Melliss, whose name has already appeared in these pages, gladdened our ears with the intelligence that the English Thrushes, Blackbirds, and other songsters which he had introduced, had thriven well, and that in the cool mornings the air resounded with their melody from many a wooded dell. One of the artillerymen had seen a Thrush's nest with four eggs.

Leaving St. Helena, we steamed an uninteresting course to Ascension, where we arrived early in the morning. A Frigate-bird (*Fregata aquila*) paid great attention to the dogvane of our foremast head, and succeeded in tearing away half of the bunting. Had it not been Sunday, I would have let my Westly Richards speak to him on the subject. *Onychoprion fuliginosus*, the bird of "Wide-awake" Fair, and a few Gannets (*Sula piscatrix*?), in young plumage, were in ample abundance; the latter perched on our jibboom-end, but were not such boobies as to let themselves be caught.

Two days after we left St. Helena we came to grief, breaking our last spare piston-rod (one had gone previously), and we had to proceed with but one engine. This obliged us to consult the wind, and alter our course; and we passed Senegal on the 24th,

just about 90 miles to the westward; but our first land visitor came off to us in the shape of a Wagtail (*Budytes rayi*). Off Cape Verde two Common Swallows (*Hirundo rustica*) boarded us, and remained about the ship for some hours, perching on the booms and boats. A small Sandpiper, much exhausted, also came and alighted on the deck. I improvised a blowpipe, or *sumpetan*, out of an old condensing-pipe belonging to the engine, but failed to find any bullets for it. At last I tried some dough, which I saw the baker kneeding into rolls; but my friend's bread was too light and delicious to be destructive to any thing; and though I hit my bird plump on the breast, my pellet only flattened, and frightened it away to a vessel in the offing.

In the Bay of Biscay the following species came and pitched on, or hovered about the ship:—two Hawks (what species I could not determine), a Stockdove, two Starlings, two Thrushes, two Robins (one of which came into the after ports, and was captured by the stewardess; it was much exhausted, and died in a few hours), one Redstart ♀, two Swallows, one Martin, three Skylarks, one Linnet, I think, a Redpole. I heard of several others, but did not see them; and my informants could only say “they are not sea-birds”—that was all they knew.

I noted a large *Lestris* more than once during the voyage; also a smaller species, with two projecting tail-feathers. I should mention that we kept a long way from land on account of the breeze, and must have been at least 150 miles from land in the Bay of Biscay. Weather was very fine and calm, or with light S.E. wind.

The most interesting bit of ornithological information that I acquired during this voyage consisted in the addition of three new birds (and the true habitats of two others) to the list of S. African birds. Four gentlemen (Capt. Watson and Messrs. Fellowes, Edwards, and Dorney) having been shooting in the neighbourhood of St. Lucia Bay, the two first named picked up a few stray specimens, though not intending to make any thing of a collection. They kindly unpacked their boxes for my inspection, and, to my great delight, I found fine examples of *Numida verreauxi*, *Ardea rufiventris* (Sund.), *Hoplopterus crassirostris*, all

new to my catalogue, also specimens of *Laniarius quadricolor* and *Buphaga erythrorhyncha*.

N. verreauxi they describe as found only in two small patches of country—one the Umgowie Forest, near the Umlalaas River, in Zululand (lat. 20°), the other on a small promontory running into St. Lucia Bay. On this bay also was procured *A. rufiventris*, about which I have no further information.

H. crassirostris was obtained in the mouth of Ihluhlui Bay, a small indent in St. Lucia Bay, and seems to have been not uncommon, annoying the hunters by its pertinacious attentions and loud cries, alarming all the large game in the vicinity. Mr. Fellowes's specimen fell a victim to his importunity.

Buphaga erythrorhyncha seems the only Ox-pecker of that region, to the exclusion of *B. africana* (which I have received from further to the northward, collected by Dr. Exton); it seems common enough, and my friends were amused at my delight at the sight of this (to me unknown) species, which I had seriously begun to think must be only a phase of plumage of the other bird. It closely resembles it, and, but for the absence of the striking yellow base of the lower mandible and the presence of the yellow eyelids, might be mistaken for it. It also wants the light rump of *B. africana*.

L. quadricolor is found in the forests of the Umgene in Natal, and is not scarce; it is very rare to the westward (Cape Colony), but one specimen having fallen under my notice; that is in the Graham's Town Museum, and was shot in Olifant's Hoek, between Port Elizabeth and the Kowie.

St. Lucia Bay is described as the very paradise of feathered fowl, and must be a grand place for a collector. The healthy months are June, July, August, and the first half of September, after which fever reigns supreme. To the sportsman it is about the most inviting field open in South Africa; and my friends reaped a rich harvest as a reward for their undertaking. They propose to return there at some future time; and I hope they will take with them a well-qualified taxidermist, to preserve the treasures which seem profusely scattered before them. Sportsmen with ample means at their disposal little know the inestimable services they

might render to science by so doing, besides the pleasure of bringing away a lasting remembrance of their expedition.

I am, &c.,

E. L. LAYARD.

SIR,—The accompanying very interesting letter from my friend Dr. Exton has reference to the habits of a bird whose home is in a part of South Africa little visited by Europeans, and still less by any who make ornithology their study.

I am proud to say Dr. Exton has been one of the many who have been induced to take up the pursuit in South Africa in consequence of the publication of my book. Armed only with it and a copy of Van der Hoeven, he identified correctly (with, I think, three exceptions) all the birds he collected in the wild country about Kanye, in the Bechuana country (lat. $24^{\circ} 50'$ S., long. $25^{\circ} 40'$ E.), and in the Matabili Veldt. In the most generous manner he presented the whole of his collection, amounting to over a hundred species, to the Cape-Town and Albany Museums, where they are much prized, consisting, as they do, of some of our rarest species.

I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

E. L. LAYARD.

Cape Town, 25th May, 1870.

SIR,—I beg leave to call your attention to a question raised by P. L. Selater, Esq., of the Zoological Society of London, relative to the crest of *Schizorhis*. In a paper by Mr. Selater, in no. 1 of the 2nd volume of the 'Student and Intellectual Observer,' on "Turacoës and their distribution," there occurs the following passage:—

"Although some of these birds—the false *Turacoës* (*Schizorhis*)—are provided with a crest, *I doubt whether that organ is ever erected and depressed* after the manner of the true *Turacoës*."

With regard to *S. concolor*, I have had frequent opportunity of noticing the elevation and depression of the crest as one of the most common habits of the bird.

In travelling through the Bechuana country one often comes upon a party of five or six of these birds, hiding from the mid-day heats under the sheltered portions of denser foliage near the centre of a large tree.

Whilst yet undisturbed, the crest lies flat on the head, and can only be seen as a tuft projecting from the occiput. But their first act on becoming aware of an intruder, is to run along the branches, either to the summit of the tree or to the extremity of a branch commanding a good look-out, where, with crest fully erected and well thrown forward, they keep up a constant reiteration of their note. If but little alarmed, they move rapidly from branch to branch, frequently jerking up the crest, and assuming an attitude of attention*.

Again, after flight from one tree to another, on alighting they first rest on a branch, with the body somewhat horizontal, and the tail drawn nearly to the perpendicular, as if assuring themselves of their equilibrium, and then raising the body, elongating their neck and at the same time elevating the crest, they seem to take an observation as to the security of their new position.

So much is this a habit of the bird, that during the conversational difficulties of my earlier intercourse with the Bechuanas, when inquiring for the nest of *Schizorhis* (the native name of which is "*Ma-quaa*"), when it dawned upon the mind of a native what bird I meant, he has imitated its note, accompanied by a sudden jerking up of the hand, with his fingers extended to their utmost, as if at the same time to mimic the elevation of the crest.

In the same paper Mr. Selater mentions that "Mr. J. J. Monteiro, speaking of the grey False Turaco (*S. concolor*), as observed in Benguela, expressly states that the crest-feathers are always carried erect." In my own experience, the observation of *Schizorhis* was an every-day occurrence; and, as I have stated, when undisturbed (also when in flight), very little of the crest is to be seen; but it is invariably carried erect on the least alarm.

I may here mention a peculiar scream of *S. concolor*. I was

* These are precisely the habits of the various species of *Colius* found in the colony.—E. L. L.

one day walking along a low ridge of rocks, from which I flushed an Owl, the common *Bubo maculosus*, that flew to some distance to a clump of trees.

Presently I heard an agonized scream, such as is made by a young antelope when just seized by a dog; and so exact a repetition of the sound was it, that even my dogs were deceived by it, and rushed off in the direction whence it came. I also sent off a Kafir boy, and presently followed myself, when I discovered it was the frightened scream of *Schizorhis*, of which a party were collected around the Owl I had previously disturbed, and whose presence appeared to be the exciting cause.

At a later period I had a second opportunity of verifying this observation.

I am, dear Sir,

Yours most truly,

E. L. Layard, Esq.

H. EXTON, M.D.

Greatham Vicarage, 15th Dec. 1870.

SIR,—In continuation of the few notes on the synonymy of the *Sylviidæ* in 'The Ibis,' Oct. 1870, I beg leave to add one or two further remarks. I have had the pleasure of receiving, through M. Jules Verreaux, a specimen of the *Phyllopneuste schwartzi*, Radde, from Lake Baikal. This new Siberian species proves to be identical with the well-known *Phylloscopus viridanus*, Blyth, J. A. S. xii. p. 967, = *Abrornis tenuiceps*, Hodgs. It is evidently the eastern representative of our *P. rufa* (L.), and never remains in India during the hot season. The Indian autumnal birds are brighter in plumage than the others.

There has been much confusion respecting *Phyllopneuste evermanni*. The bird so figured by Middendorff is undoubtedly distinct from the *P. evermanni*, Bp., and is perhaps the *P. borealis*, Blas. I have Middendorff's bird from the south side of Lake Baikal, 18th June. It is identical with *P. sylvicultrix*, Swinh. A specimen shot at Amoy in April, given me by Mr. Swinhoe, exactly corresponds in dimensions and shade with my Baikal bird. The autumnal and winter specimens from China are brighter in colour. This is exactly as in the British *P. trochilus*. Some of Mr. Swinhoe's specimens are rather smaller,

but, being procured at the same times and places with the slightly larger forms, cannot, I conceive, be separated. If this bird is not *P. borealis*, Blas., Mr. Swinhoe's name will stand.

The birds which I have from Lake Baikal as *P. evermanni*, Bp., = *S. icterina*, Eversm., are totally distinct, and belong to another group, much larger, with a short compressed bill, rounder wing, and are, in fact, simply the eastern representative of *P. trochilus*.

Under the name of *Phylloscopus fuscatus*, Blyth, I conceive that three distinct species have been confounded. Mr. Gray, in his invaluable Hand-list, includes *Phylloneste sibirica*, Midd., under *P. fuscatus*, Blyth. Having now obtained a fair series of specimens from Siberia, India, and China, I find that this identification is only partially correct. Of the three species, from India and China, which have been classed as *P. fuscatus*, the largest is identical with *P. sibirica*, Middend. The intermediate form, procured in abundance by Mr. Swinhoe, is identical with *P. maacki*, Schrenk. The eggs of the larger specimens, from Lake Baikal, are pure white. I have seen many, and possess a nest. The eggs of the smaller bird, taken by Mr. Swinhoe in China, are like some varieties of *P. trochilus*, white with pale red blotches over the whole surface. There is yet a much smaller bird of the same group, on which I must not venture to dilate without consultation with my friend Mr. Swinhoe. Blyth, in his Catalogue, no. 1110, gives *P. brunneus*, J. A. S. xiv. p. 591, described from a small specimen, and subsequently J. A. S. xvi. p. 443, as a variety of *fuscatus*. It seems probable that the original discrimination was correct, in which case *P. maacki* must merge in *P. brunneus*, Blyth.

Yours, &c.

H. B. TRISTRAM.

Upper Norwood, 25th Oct. 1870.

SIR,—I trust the following notes respecting the nesting of *Mycteria australis* may prove of interest to your readers. Not far from my house at Mainpure, North-West Provinces of India, there stood an aged Peepul (*Ficus religiosa*); and in the top of

this tree there was a mass of sticks measuring not less than 5 or 6 feet in diameter. A pair of gigantic Storks daily winged their way to and from this tree; and my observations on them led me to conclude that they were nesting; these were, moreover, confirmed by my egg-collector, who had noticed both birds in the tree at the same time. Seen from below, the nest appeared to be an accumulation of materials from the nests of Vultures (*Gyps bengalensis*) and Wokhabs (*Aquila fulvescens*); and I had hitherto considered it to be the common roosting-place of the Black-necked Storks.

On December 26, however, I persuaded a boy to climb the tree, a feat which he accomplished with great difficulty; and I was rewarded with the acquisition of four eggs, one quite fresh, one addled, and two with young chicks in them. During the month of December I visited three other nests, with the following results. From the first, two young birds flew off in a very juvenile state of plumage. From the second, four fully fledged young birds fell and were so killed. From the third, one young bird flew away fully fledged. Other nests were found empty. The eggs I took from the first nest were oval and of a uniform pure white colour, but had the inner lining of the dark green tint common to the eggs of birds of this class. They measured $2\frac{3}{4}$ in. by $2\frac{1}{6}$ in., and struck me as small when considered with regard to the size of the bird and its nest. In 1868 I asked Mr. Brookes, the well-known ornithologist of Etawah, to look out for nests of this species. On December 13, 1869, he wrote to me saying that he had found several nests containing one, two, and four eggs, the last number appearing to be the full complement. The first egg he obtained in the middle of October, but after that date he could discover no more; so that I infer that the eggs I took must have been laid unusually late. Mr. Brookes also remarked that the eggs were very uniform in size.

The position chosen for the nest is usually the top of the highest tree. It may be not unfrequently observed in a huge solitary Seemul- or Cotton-tree, rising some 100 feet from the grassy plain, and visible for miles round. The nest is composed of a mass of sticks and boughs, to which is added a little coarse

grass. It is most difficult of access, many of the boughs being from a thorny *Acacia*, which grows in abundance in the neighbourhood. The birds perch either on the nest or on the tree, and stand out in bold relief against the sky, forming a striking object in the landscape.

The nests are used by other birds; a large Fishing-Eagle (*Haliaëtus leucoryphus*) or Vulture (*Gyps calvus*) will sometimes take possession at a season when it is not required by the Storks. These leave various traces of their occupation, rendering it somewhat doubtful to which species to ascribe the rightful ownership, and which was the original builder of the structure.

I am,

Yours &c.,

CHARLES HORNE.

Auchnaba House,

Loch-Gilp Head, N.B.

20th December, 1870.

SIR,—It may interest some of the readers of 'The Ibis' to hear that a Quail's nest, with twelve eggs (eight of which are in my possession), was taken at the end of July last in the island of North Uist. The bird was captured on the nest, and the breast-bone sent to me. A Knot in summer plumage was also sent to me at the same time from the same island.

I am,

Yours &c.,

J. W. P. ORDE.

Chislehurst, Jan. 11, 1871.

SIR,—Dr. Jerdon has kindly informed me that he considers *Prinia albogularis*, nob., Ann. Nat. Hist. ser. 4, vol. v. p. 219, = *Prinia hodgsoni*, Blyth, J. A. S. B. vol. xiii. p. 376. And I wish to add that *Ephialtes jerdoni*, nob., *tom. cit.*, p. 417, = *Scops malabaricus*, Jerdon, Madras J. L. & S. xiii: p. 119.

I remain,

Yours obediently,

WALDEN.
